/15 cont./

462 morocco-leather (tsush) so popular with foreigners; this tsush
[281] serves in Abkhazia for bedding in summer. The men make
[513] beautiful spoons out of wood and animal horns. Many hunters
[912] kill seven or eight bears a year, but do not sell the skins. In
437 general buying and selling in Abkhazia are done by barter;
money is not used in these cases.

433 The main sources of food of the Abkhaz are agriculture,
[231] cattle-breeding, and to a certain extent, apiculture. In the
foothills the Abkhaz often possess as many as 200 and more
[541] beehives. Nowadays they sow maize and occasionally wheat.
A few years ago, gomi (ghomi) /millet/ was considered the main
and most widespread cereal, but now maize has completely
supplanted it. Besides this, tobacco, cotton, flax, hemp, and
vegetables are sown, but in limited quantity and only for home use.

● 233 Cattle constitute the main wealth of the Abkhaz; in
[556] their opinion this is the main support of the life of man; it is
what feeds him, makes him grow, and preserves him. The
Abkhaz cannot conceive of life without cattle; one can somehow
manage to get along without bread, but not without cattle.
This conception is especially true of the herdsmen, of whom it
[262] may be said /16/ that they live almost exclusively on meat and
milk. To feed his herd, not infrequently consisting of no more
than two or three head of cattle, the Abkhaz, when grass gave
out in one place, would move to another place where grass was
easier to find, taking along his phatskha (hut of wattles). So it
[178] was until the last war; after that the main attention of the
[243] Abkhaz was concentrated on the sowing of maize, the export
of which is growing day by day.

342 The structure of the Abkhaz house, the phatskha, is simple.
In appearance it is round or rectangular. The walls of the
phatskha slope upwards and are woven together with thin nut-
twigs; on top of these rests a cone-shaped roof; the top of the
cone is tied together with willow-branches or twigs; the branches
are supported by little poles (dardzagini /see foreign text/). This
[824] simple structure is covered with ferns, reeds, or spear-grass
(Agrostis vulgaris).

/16 cont./

342 Another kind of phatskha, in the form of an irregular rectangular, is constructed as follows. Two chestnut poles are driven into the ground at the front door in such a way that the upper ends touch each other. The Abkhaz call them amakratl-khkva (scissors). On the side opposite the "scissors" another pole is driven in; a beam is laid on top of the "scissors" and this pole, and the roof rests on it. The roof of such a phatskha can be flat or sloping. Such a phatskha can be built in any size. A passage is made in front of it, and in the back there is a special com-
•[233] partment for storing all kinds of utensils and for keeping the cattle in winter. The walls of the phatskha are not covered; only in winter are they now and then covered with ferns. Therefore the walls are easily penetrated by light, and at the same time by cold and rain.

354 Inside the house, in the middle of the phatskha, is the
[252] hearth (akhushtaara), made of clay or hewn stone. Above the
[415] hearth cast-iron kettles are suspended from the ceiling on hoops; in these the food is cooked. The Abkhaz try to maintain a permanent fire in the hearth. The smoke escapes through the roof, but on windy days it remains circling inside the room; therefore the phatskha, and especially the upper part of it, is
352 covered with soot. On one side of the phatskha there is a couch; near the hearth stands a long and fairly wide bench, which sometimes also serves as a couch. The bedding is arranged on the couch; nearby stands a trunk, where all the necessary articles are kept. On the wall hang a saddle, a whip, and some
415 of the /17/ weapons. In a corner, close to the wall, are the utensils for preparing ghomi; in this same corner are baskets for provisions, wooden or horn spoons and cups hang on the wall, while milk-pails and troughs, etc. stand on the floor. Basins and pitchers are rarely found; instead of a pitcher, a gourd
412 is used. A few implements must be added to all this: a flat stone used as a mortar, and a whetstone. And that is the whole domestic inventory of the Abkhaz of average means.

342 The large quadrangular phatskha serves as the main family
585 dwelling, while the conical one (khkvatsu) serves as a lodging for

/50 cont./

782 233 [796] On the day set for the prayer, usually at the time when the herds are driven into the mountains for the summer and when they return in autumn, the shepherds of the village break up into several groups, each group choosing a pretty spot in the forest near a brook or river. Some rams, according to the number of participants, are slaughtered, and the oldest shepherd of those departing for the mountains addresses Aphi, begging him to preserve them as well as their herd from the thunder- [562] bolts. Women and children do not dare to be present at the prayers to Aphi, and women may not even pronounce his name. When talking of Aphi, the Abkhaz usually say "khakhikal" ("the one above" or "the supreme one.")

782 731 789 During a prolonged drought, a prayer with sacrifices is offered in honor of Aphi. The best bull is chosen from the herd and a day is set for the sacrifice. The villagers bring gomi, bread, fresh cheese, and a jug of wine. The most venerable old man holds a rope fastened to the horns of the bull; removing his cap, he pronounces the following prayer, "Oh Aphi, master of thunder, lightning, and rain! have pity on your people. Our harvests have dried up, the grass is withered, our livestock perishes from want of feed, and therefore /51/ death from hunger threatens us. Command the rain-clouds to gather, command the thunder to peal, the lightning to flash, and send us rain to save the perishing people." The participants say "Amen," and the sacrificial animal is killed and its meat cooked. After all the dishes, made from ingredients brought with him, have been pre- [533] pared and laid out on mats, the old man who said the prayer repeats it, and then, with the singing of a hymn in praise of Aphi, the feast begins. This hymn is called Anchva rysshva and is sung in honor of Aphi, not only at feasts, but also [821] during thunderstorms. In the first instance, it is sung with thankfulness for the gifts that are enjoyed, in the second, to move Aphi to send good weather. During the feasts, one 782 731 574 of the elders usually addresses a speech to those present, reminding them that all they are then enjoying comes with the blessing of Aphi and suggesting that they thank him. Then

C [756 cont.]
712 laid out similarly, except that they had wickerwork instead of poles. The shepherds built themselves watchtowers, resting on four piles, made of beams eight meters high laid horizontally on top of one another, which likewise were provided with embrasures.

C
726 On their war and raiding expeditions the Cherkess used
342 tents which they had probably borrowed from the neighboring
[177] Tatars. The simpler ones consisted of two inclined poles bound together at the top, over which the felt coverings were hung, and the supporting ropes were made fast in the woods on any convenient root. The better-equipped ones had the beehive shape of the Tatar-Mongol tents (Vol. II, I, Figs. 231, 232); they were [757]

C
342
351
343

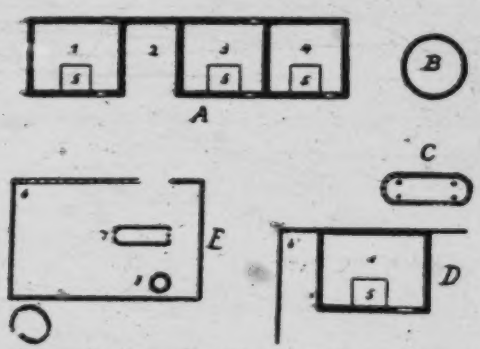

Fig. 448. Ground plan of a Cherkess farmstead in the village Biberd. A Dwelling: 1, 3, and 4, rooms with (5) fireplaces and chimneys of wickerwork, 2 open room; B, small wickerwork stable with thatched roof; C, wickerwork maize-granary on piles; D, house with fireplace (5) and chimney, serving as winter stable, surrounded by a plashed hedge (6); E, fenced-in barnyard with troughs (7 and 8).

C
726 draped on the inside with rush-mats and carpeted with rugs, had
342 a smoke-hole at the top, and probably also had lattice-work
[350] and a stable roof framework like the aforementioned central Asiatic tents.

A
● 233 Domestic economy. Until recently the Abkhaz engaged principally in animal husbandry, although the climate is

A 233 [757 cont.]

unfavorable for it, for example, the cattle are therefore small. The herdsmen wandered with the stock from pasture to pasture, and from time to time built [Fig. 449 appears here] anew their A 241 wickerwork huts (see above, p. 6), which they took along with them. Now agriculture seems to predominate; the major crop is maize, but earlier it was spiked millet or, less often, wheat. Besides these, they also cultivate beans, flax, hemp, cotton,

C 411

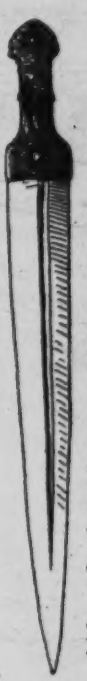

Fig. 449. Cherkess dagger with bone handle, colored green, and silver studs (1/3 natural size) (Museum für Völkerkunde, Hamburg).

A 241 tobacco (that grown in Sukhumi is known as the best in the Caucasus), rice, climbing cucumbers, pumpkins, melons, many grapes and fruits: apples, pears, plums, figs, chestnuts, A 242 pomegranates, nuts, and others. Berry bushes grow on the slopes in great number, but their fruit is almost never used in the economy, as in Georgia.

C [769 cont.]
796 and lighted with lamps, is set up in the house of an elder of the
S kin group. An animal is sacrificed in honor of the god, and after
[782] the feast the cheese is distributed among the participants as a magical remedy. Other festivals are celebrated: for the new year and for Easter, in March, when one first fasts, then slaughters an offering in the sacred grove, and enjoys himself by shooting at eggs, etc.; at the beginning of the harvest, when roasted unripe wheat with sour milk, and later other kinds of grain and fruit, are eaten as festive dishes; in October when the plants wither, etc.

A The Abkhaz show their reverence for the gods and spirits
796 at given occasions or on certain holidays by the sacrificial offer-
782 ing of animals, milk, bread, and other things, and by prayers, which are often constructed with a wealth of words and are poetically exalted.

Thus, on New Year's Eve they kneel in prayer, sprinkling incense on a coal-pan, around a rectangular cheese-cake (suluguni)--this custom is called Kalinda, cf. the Kolinda of the Rumanians and others--and on New Year's Day the father of the house lays wheat bread with an egg baked in it on everyone's breast, and he directs the "heart-prayer" (gunykhwa) to God, that they may be protected from heart disease. On Christmas Day between the first crow of the cock and daybreak he begs that they be spared from stomach ailments; afterwards everyone eats a chicken and four small pieces of cheese-bread (kwakwari). The celebration of Syošu is also held on New Year's Eve, especially by the smiths. Here the father of the house prays to him for health and protection against harm from their work tools, and he throws into the fire pieces of curd-cake and of the heart and liver from the sacrificial animals: a sheep or calf for the father of the house, a rooster for each member of the family [Familie].

A Before driving the animals into the mountains and after
●233 driving them from there, the herdsmen sacrifice a ram in honor
[782] of the god of lightning (Ap'i, khakhikal = he who lives above,
C called Sible by the Cherkess) and pray that he spare them and
[776] their herds. When an animal is killed by lightning, [770] the
A owner calls out all the villagers; while singing and dancing
[231]

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzv16zha

I quote here the following story: "A female slave of a family, being angry with her masters, took a portion of the dough for *akwakwər* destined for the "god" *Got'anùa*, and placing it in a scoop of bitter-gourd (*akwapey*, Geo. *kopi*), hid it in the loft. As usual the family went to bed after the ceremony. But unfortunately for them the offended *Got'anùa* soundly thrashed all of them, using for the purpose the very same scoop in which had been hidden the dough destined for himself. This *gvari* makes propitiatory offerings at the will of sorcerers to *Got'anùa* twice a year, during the night before Christmas and before the Assumption.

Got'anùa, under the name of *Okhvdmuri*, evidently spread throughout Megrelia during the missionaryship of Lamberti.[1]

V. Deities whose Cults have no Fixed Dates

1. *Et-nòkha—Àga-nòkha*

The sea, like other manifestations of nature, has its own "part of deity", called *Àga-inkhwò* or *àga-intswakhwò*. An Abkhaz makes an offering to this deity when he goes to the sea coast for any considerable time. The sea deity is not to be trifled with; if it is slighted it becomes turbulent, it surges, and punishes the unrespectful. Therefore even the children are forbidden to throw pebbles, or to spit into the sea. The worship of this deity has been preserved in its purest form among the Bzib Abkhasians, namely among the peasantry of the Gudout (Gudaut) district, of the *gvari* of Amp'aràa. It has been described by A. Tch(ukbar), in *Sotrudnik Zakavkazskoy Missii* ("The Collabarator of the Transcaucasian Mission"), 1912, p. 373 sqq., where the deity *Et-nòkh-Àga-nòkha* is called *Et-nykh Ag-Nykh*. *Àga* denotes sea, *(a)nòkh*—"icon." But what does the word *Et* denote?[2]

2. *Àshkha-intswakhwò* (god of mountains)

Mountains also have "their part of God" known under the name of *Àshkha-intswakhwò*. *Àshkha* denotes mountain; *intswakhwò*, "his (of the male rational being) part of God." I have pointed out above that the Abkhaz often uses the word *nòkha* in the sense of god, which in the Christian faith is understood, or more correctly, translated, as icon. The god of mountains "governs" all the mountains and the beasts inhabiting them. Abkhaz shepherds make offerings to this god twice a year, in the spring when they drive the cattle to the mountains, and in the autumn when they drive them back. To him are subject also mountain game. In order to preserve the game from

[1] A. Lamberti, op. cit., pp. 148-9.

[2] This word manifests a consonance with the Assyro-Babylonian name of the god of the sea, *Ea*. Is this a mere coincidence?